

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5479

As of February 10, 2011

Title: An act relating to high school mathematics and science assessments.

Brief Description: Regarding high school mathematics and science assessments.

Sponsors: Senators McAuliffe and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/07/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Susan Mielke (786-7422)

Background: In 1998 the Legislature required school districts to establish three-year performance improvement goals for fourth grade reading as measured by the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). In 1999 the Legislature required school districts to also establish three-year performance improvement goals for fourth grade mathematics as measured by the WASL. In 2002 the Legislature removed the goal requirements from statute and directed the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) to establish the goals for districts by rule. When the A+ Commission was abolished in 2005 the State Board of Education (SBE) was directed to establish and revise the goals in reading, writing, math, and science. Those goals are not yet established.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2013, students will have to meet the state standards on both the mathematics and the science end-of-course examinations to graduate from high school.

Summary of Bill: A process for school districts to develop, implement, and report on three-year growth targets for high school mathematics and science is created.

Growth Targets. By December 15, 2011, at an open, public meeting, each district must:

- establish three-year growth targets (at both the district and for each high school level) to increase the number of students who meet the state mathematics and science standards established for high school graduation on the state assessments; and
- establish district-wide and school-level plans to achieve the mathematics and science growth targets, which must address graduation rates, dropout reduction, and school

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attendance; and may address the performance of different student groups on assessments, strategic allocation of resources, frequency of monitoring of learning and teaching, focused professional development, supportive learning environments, high level of family and community involvement, and any unique circumstances or characteristics of the school district.

The SBE will review the district growth targets using their accountability index and if the targets are appropriate and reasonable then the SBE must approve them. If they are not appropriate then the SBE must work with the districts to establish appropriate targets that can be approved. If by December 1, 2014, a school district does not meet the growth targets then the district must develop a plan for improvement to be reviewed and approved by the SBE. The SBE must develop a process for the development and approval of a school district's improvement plan modeled after the required action process but streamlined and focused only on the achievement of the district growth targets. The SBE must also develop measures to assess other non-assessment school improvements.

Reports. Each school district must annually report:

- to parents and the community in the school report card and at a public meeting the following information:
 - district-wide and school-level three-year growth targets;
 - student performance by subgroups relative to the growth targets; and
 - district-wide and school-level plans to achieve the mathematics and science growth targets; and
- to the SBE and in a news release to the local media the district's progress toward meeting the district-wide and school-level growth targets.

By December 1, 2014, the SBE must report to the Legislative education committees on the progress that has been made in achieving the three-year mathematics and science growth targets, and provide recommendations to the legislature on setting growth targets for the next three years.

The current requirement for the SBE to adopt and revise performance improvement goals in reading, writing, science, and mathematics is made permissive. If the SBE establishes such goals then districts must annually report on performance improvement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There was visible improvement made when the initial fourth grade reading goals were reported and many of the school districts made their goals early. Now the majority of our students are meeting the state standards in reading and writing. It is time to focus on math and science to give students the foundational knowledge they need to be successful. We like the concept of positive goals to increase the

student achievement, and it is appropriate to assign this to the school boards. The SBE would need to have one additional full-time employee to do the work required by the bill. Looking at student improvement over time is much better than just a snapshot in time. We suggest including reading and writing in the goals and we seek clarity as to how the SBE process would be modeled on the required action plan and the SBE criteria for review. December 2012 is too early to set the targets because we won't have a baseline of data for the new math end-of-course assessments, so the targets should be set to 2013 or later. You need to add language to exempt very small numbers of students in a subgroup from reporting scores to avoid federal Family Educational Records Privacy Act (FERPA) issues. Also, we need to make the requirement for implementing the plans contingent on funding provided, like the required action plans. You need to coordinate and streamline the current goals without adding to them. A reasonable standard is very subjective and we would prefer an objective standard of review by the SBE. We suggest changing the public meeting to a public hearing process. We don't want to increase dropout rates as a result from the target requirement, so we request that you explicitly require an increase in graduation rates. It is important for us to expand the conversation to more than talking about high standards; this bill includes how we get to those standards. We especially appreciate the public process for setting the targets in which parents and the community can participate.

OTHER: Setting goals without addressing the current timeline for the assessments for graduation purposes will not solve the problem and we suggest addressing the assessment issues in the bill. In some ways the goals are already set because the graduation requirements, the annual yearly progress or AYP required by from the federal No Child Left Behind, the SBE accountability index, and the federal low-performing index all could be considered goals and they are all different. OSPI should do this instead of the SBE because they already collect much of this information. The timeline is too aggressive. We agree with the FERPA concerns already raised.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator McAuliffe, prime sponsor; Brad Burnham, SBE; Wendy Rader-Konafalske, WEA; Marile Scarbourough, WSSDA; Ramona Hattendorf, Washington PTA.

OTHER: Bob Butts, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Jerry Bender, Association of Washington School Principals; Wes Pruitt, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board; Dan Steele, Washington Association of School Administrators.